

The **NEWS -
LETTER**
Inyo-
Mono

November
1982

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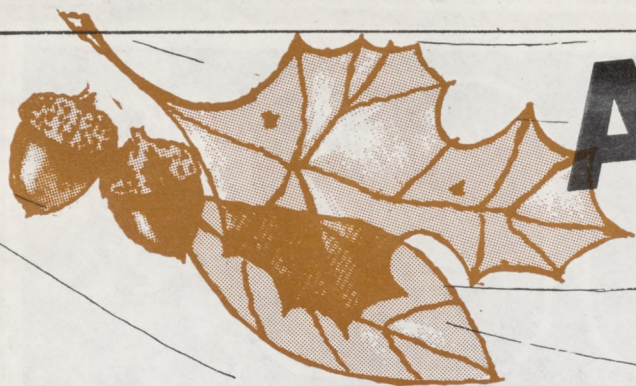
*BK's
notes
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DAPHNE SMITH:

A guilty plea and some
surprising background, Page 6

The water fight: What L.A. Councilmen think p.18



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ON THE COVER

As one guard stood by with shackles in hand, another lit the cigarette of murder suspect Daphne Smith. Now, her trial's off after a guilty plea to manslaughter. See page 6.

Photo: Marilyn Fisher



A News Alternative Eastern Sierra News Service

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Andrew and Leah Kirk

in this issue:

FORUM

Views from our readers.

NEWS BRIEFS

The daughter of Mono's sheriff-elect plays policewoman / Southern Inyo Hospital tries to get well / More headaches for the Inyo auditor.

GUILTY PLEAS

It's two down and two to go for Inyo murder trials after Steve Wilson and Daphne Smith change their minds and plead guilty.

BENBROOK

Clarence Benbrook takes a look at the lighter side of the news.

HYDRO

In the continuing epic of Eastern Sierra stream battles, the residents near tiny Oak Creek dig in for a fight.

HOME ON THE RANGE

A feisty 86-year-old Independence resident recalls her colorful days as a "buckaroo" on the open range.

L.A. SPEAKS

What do L.A. City Council members think of the Inyo water fight? Benett Kessler found out.

BOOKS

Eva Poole reviews *Spirit Woman*

NOTES FROM BK

A penny-wise and pound-foolish approach / Hold the Bristlecones hostage? / Dining out

FORUM your view



The News-Letter welcomes readers' letters and comments relevant to public issues. Letters should be brief and concisely stated. The editors remind readers that publication of a letter does not necessarily imply either the editor's agreement with its content, or its accuracy. Address letters to PO Box 531, Independence, California 93526.

John Heston, editor

FORMER HOSPITAL CHIEF RAPS ALLEGED DISCOUNTS TO BOARD MEMBERS

Editor:

Needless to say, I'm upset after hearing your KNYO radio news about the accusations that two members of the Southern Inyo Hospital Board of Directors had their own personal hospital bills reduced so that they did not have to pay the full amounts of their accounts. The Administrator is also accused of doing the same thing for himself.

Discounting or lowering personal bills for SIH directors during my administration (1959-1973) was never permitted --actually no director ever requested lowering his personal hospital bills. Neither did I, as the administrator, ever ask for such gratuities. I always felt my salary paid me for my

duties, and personal hospital bills were my obligation to pay in full like any other patient was requested to do.

If a director had ever asked me during my administration to have his hospital account reduced I would have referred him to Division 23, Section 32103 of the State of California Health and Safety Code relative to laws for hospital districts.

Although I never had the necessity to obtain a legal ruling for allowing any SIH director a lowering of his personal hospital bill, I always felt that making such an allowance would be giving him improper compensation, either directly or indirectly.

Managers and high officers of private enterprise have the privilege of granting discounts when they so desire. But So. Inyo Hospital is not private enterprise--it is the property of the taxpayers of the So. Inyo County Local Hospital

District who approved the various bond issues and are paying taxes to pay interest on those bonds and annual partial retirement of the bonds. Also, the taxpayers are paying an additional tax to subsidize the business operations of Southern Inyo Hospital.

Charles L. Hapke

CONCERNED CITIZENS ASK SUPES FOR CLEAR GOALS IN TALKS WITH DWP

(Editor's Note: This is a copy of a letter sent by the Concerned Citizens of Owens Valley, Inc. to the Inyo Supervisors with a copy to the News-Letter.)

Dear Supervisors:

Now that the Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Los Angeles has been adopted, we trust that Inyo County has

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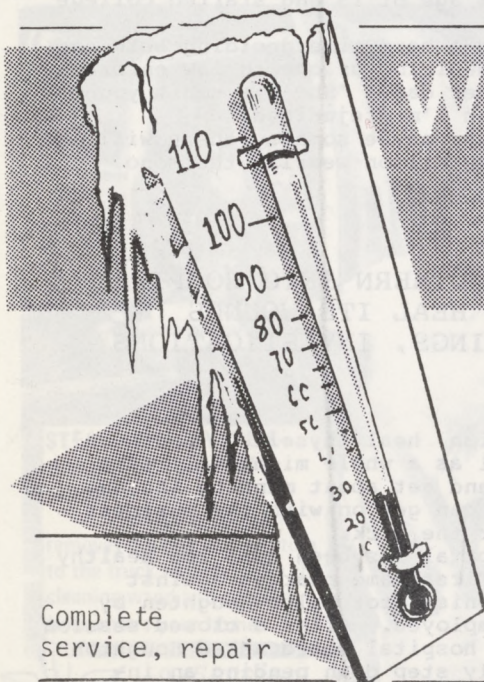
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News Briefs

THE DAUGHTER OF MONO'S SHERIFF-ELECT, A BUDDING POLICEWOMAN, FINDS HERSELF WHERE THE ACTION IS / HOUGHTON'S OUT BUT SOUTHERN INYO HOSPITAL IS STILL PLAGUED BY CONTROVERSY / THE HEADACHES CONTINUE WITH INYO'S AUDIT PROBLEMS

Most, by now, have heard the infamous tale of "The Mammoth Flasher." A Turlock man allegedly walked into the Mammoth Baskin-Robbins ice cream store this summer adorned in female finery including a dress, high heels, wig, earrings and, of course, a strategically altered pair of panty hose. Rather than purchase a scoop or two, Chris Dyra, 30, is alleged to have hitched up his dress and shown everyone in the store what he/she was really made of. She was a he.

But behind the counter stood 17-year-old Shelly Wilson of Mammoth. Shelly happens to be the daughter of Mono Sheriff-elect Lloyd "Digger" Wilson and already shows great promise in becoming a chip off the old deputy.

Rather than panic, Shelly calmly called the sheriff's office. The suspect ran from the store and was later nabbed by an off-duty probation officer from L.A. in the

parking lot of the Red Rooster Mall. But Shelly's involvement was not yet over. Once Dyra was taken to the substation, it was learned that there were prior indecent exposure convictions on his record and with Shelly there to make the citizen's arrest, Dyra was charged with felony indecent exposure. Now the younger Wilson will be called on as a witness when that case goes to trial.

The sheriff-to-be says this is only one instance in which his daughter is getting a lot of practical experience in her chosen field. Shelly is majoring in police science at the College of the Redwoods and plans to enter the police academy as soon as she turns 18.

Shelly was also on the witness stand in another court case: last December she was a passenger in a car that was hit by a drunk driver. She suffered a broken jaw, and separated ribs and was called upon to testify when that case went to court.

Shelly seems to be racking up a lot of job-related experience for one so young, but then she's always been a little bit ahead of the pack. She graduated from Mammoth High School at the age of 15 and started college at 16.

"She had a hard time deciding between a career in medicine or one in law enforcement," says her dad. "She's a smart young lady, but then I'm prejudiced."

Who knows, maybe someday there will be another Deputy Wilson wearing the Mono County badge.

Political advertisement paid for by Kay Condie

elect
Don Dorsey



SHERIFF

AILING SOUTHERN INYO HOSPITAL
TRIES TO HEAL ITS WOUNDS
AMID FIRINGS, INVESTIGATIONS

"Physician, heal thyself." Southern Inyo Hospital as a whole might well take that advice and set about mending its own wounds so it can get on with the business of caring for the sick.

The hospital has been none too healthy this year. First came charges against Hospital Administrator Ralph Houghton by a hospital employee. After a closed session meeting, the hospital board asked Houghton to temporarily step down pending an investigation. Then came charges that Houghton plus board members Clarence Streeter and Jack Stuckey had their or their families' medical bills all or partially "written off" as a privilege of their position.

That matter is now under investigation by the Inyo District Attorney's Office but in the meantime Houghton was formally dis-

missed. Board member and acting administrator Paul Payne said the grounds for the dismissal was that the board felt Houghton "had lost his credibility" with the board and the staff.

Will criminal charges be brought against any of the three men alleged to have improperly reduced their bills? Hard to say. But as former Southern Inyo Hospital Administrator Charles Hapke pointed out (see Forum, page 2) there is a section of the Health and Safety Code pertaining to such things. Section 32103 states, "The members of the board of directors shall serve without compensation except that each shall be allowed his actual necessary traveling and incidental expenses incurred in the performance of official business of the district as approved by the board."

The hospital's auditing firm of Ross, Landis and Pauw has called the action a "violation of policy." Board president Bruce Ivey has been more straightforward. "Whether or not it's illegal, the attorneys will have to decide," he said. "I think it's unethical."

Board member Streeter, facing two challengers in the November election, contends in May of 1981 the board agreed to give itself a 100% discount of the medical bills not paid by insurance. When board president Ivey refuted that and said no such action ever appeared in board minutes, Streeter and Stuckey contended that the decision had been made "coming out of executive session"

continued on page 9

A VOTE FOR REPUBLICANS

IS A VOTE

AGAINST PROP. 15 - GUN CONTROL
FOR PROP. 14 - FAIR DISTRICTING
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U. S. SENATE: PETE WILSON	X
GOVERNOR: GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN	X
LT. GOVERNOR: CAROL HALLETT	X
ATTORNEY GENERAL: GEORGE NICHOLSON	X
SECRETARY OF STATE: GORDON DUFFY	X
STATE TREASURER: DON FRENCH	X
STATE CONTROLLER: JAMES FLOURNOY	X
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STATE ASSEMBLY: PHILLIP D. NYMAN	X
BD OF EQUALIZATION: WILLIAM H. IVERS	X

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Surprise guilty pleas

TWO MURDER CASES ARE CANCELLED BUT IN THE DAPHNE SMITH CASE, SOME QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED...

The guilty pleas in two Inyo murder cases came just days apart, leaving some surprised, some relieved and many curious about the questions that will now not be answered at trial.

First came the sudden change of plea by Steve Wilson from not guilty by reason of insanity to guilty of first degree murder in the shooting death of his former father-in-law, Olantha rancher Bill Thornburgh. While Wilson did not bargain for a lesser charge or a reduced sentence, he did make the plea conditional upon his right to appeal an earlier refusal to move his trial to another county. If that appeal should be granted the plea could be invalidated and the case would go back to court.

Just a few days after Wilson's surprise plea, another defendant charged with murder made a similar move. Daphne Louise Smith, 22, accused in the shooting death of former Big Pine teacher Bob Watkins, agreed to instead plead guilty to voluntary manslaughter and admit the use of a firearm in the commission of the crime. In return Smith will be sentenced to the lowest of three possible terms--two years for manslaughter plus two more for the enhancement.

By definition in the penal code, voluntary manslaughter is a killing without malice "upon a sudden quarrel or heat of passion."

The complete story of just how Bob Watkins died may never be known, but pieces of the puzzle are now appearing. District Attorney Buck Gibbons says Watkins was last seen with Smith on Wednesday, April 7. His body was discovered the following Saturday at the Hot Ditch area but Watkins was not positively identified for several days after that. What transpired? "We know she left her apartment with Watkins on Wednesday night," says Gibbons. "She returned shortly thereafter. He was not seen after that time."

The two had been in the company of others at Smith's apartment prior to leaving that night. "It looks like they had announced their intentions to go to Hot Ditch," he said. "Others in the room didn't want to go. Then when she came back she said that she got in the car to go, had a fight with Watkins and decided not to go. She said he left."

There was no indication just what that fight may have been about other than the allegation Smith had earlier "made

statements that she did not like him 'pawing her.'" Gibbons said the prosecution had no other evidence as to the nature of the argument.

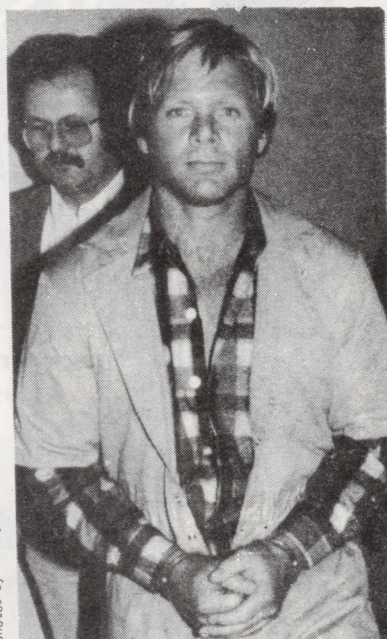
A persistent rumor that Watkins had been sexually mutilated is flatly denied by Inyo law enforcement personnel. "It's absolutely not true," said Detective Monte Yancey. "That rumor got started right after his death too, but it's not true. He died of one gunshot wound to the head. There were no other injuries."

The weapon used in the killing was one Smith had purchased while living in Bishop and working two jobs at a Bishop motel and at Jack's Waffle Shop.

At the time of her arrest in Phoenix, Arizona, Smith had also been working, but at a different sort of job. Records of the Phoenix Police Dept. show that the six foot, 150 lb. Smith was picked up on prostitution and sexual indecency charges on August 16, a few weeks after she had left Bishop for Arizona. According to the police report, Smith flagged down a car in an area of Phoenix known for its "high rate of prostitution activity" and once inside, allegedly made a sexual overture to the driver and offered to perform oral sex for \$20. The driver of the car, however, turned out to be Thomas Hitafer, a detective working undercover vice enforcement for the Phoenix PD. Smith was booked into the Maricopa County Jail where a routine check showed she was wanted on an Inyo County warrant charging her with murder. Within two weeks, Smith had been flown back to Inyo County to stand trial here.

Public Defender Dean Stout, who represented Smith, has refused to comment on the case. But the plea continues to be a topic of much discussion. Some feel Smith is being given only "a slap on the wrist" while others feel the D.A. scored a victory. But all the debate is carried out by those who don't know - or can only guess - just how strong a case either side might have had.

Both Smith and Wilson are expected to be transported to state prison after their formal sentencings in early November.



photos by Marilyn Fisher

Smith, left, and Wilson, above, after their arrests

Benbrook



by
Clarence
Benbrook

READING THE HEADLINES IS ENOUGH TO MAKE ONE
CRY THESE DAYS. BUT NOT CLARENCE BENBROOK...
WITH TONGUE PLANTED FIRMLY IN CHEEK, HE
QUIPS HIS WAY THROUGH CURRENT EVENTS.

99.9 million people are employed. The
rest are showing up on TV.

Nancy Kissinger wins airport scuffle
suit. She learned scuffle diplomacy from
Henry.

Scientists say dandruff is as old as
man. From hair to eternity.

Women control most of the riches in the
U.S. And the rest is controlled by their
husbands - with their permission.

There was a campaign to help infertal
women have babies. It was stopped when 500
men were injured in the crush.

Richard Senate, who teaches a college
course in ghosts, swears that Ventura County
is full of them. We also have them in
Spokane, Washington and in all states from
ghost to ghost.

The State of California used TV ads in
their Medfly fight. Don't they know that
Medflies don't watch TV?

Reagan unveils his peace plan for
Israel. Begin unveils his finger.

Everybody will get their rights some
day. The last rites of the church.

California Legislative pay hike dies.
It just took a little hike until after the
next election.

President Reagan asks for the nation's
people to help in ending the recession. The
doctor asks the patient to cure himself.

Dept. of Water and Power wants to make
a deal with Inyo County. We quit bugging
them about our water and they'll quit cutting
down our dead trees.

A District of Columbia statehood con-
vention has approved a resolution to make the
District of Columbia the 51st state. Some
people would vote to make it a separate
foreign country.

Jimmy Carter is writing his memoirs
and the book will be published by Bantam. A
midget being published by a Bantam.

Castro brags that Cuba has no drugs, no
gambling, no prostitution, no beggars and
no unemployment. He might add no food and
no fun.

Three people were killed in Sylmar
after an evening of drinking and arguing.
How about a law to register drinkers and
arguers?

Barter is making a comeback. Will trade
one president, a bunch of bureaus, Congress
and a supreme court for one old Constitution.

Billy Martin should be appointed head of
the Dept. of Water and Power. He kicks up
almost as much dust as an Owens Valley wind.

The sale of cluster bombs for Israel
held back by the United States. If they
want to bomb, let them drop one at a time
like civilized people.

PLO may be ready to recognize Israel.
Just as soon as Israel gets their attention.

Michael Reagan, son of President Reagan,
set a new speedboat record. His father just
set a new tax record.

Reagan says economic upturn has been
sighted. He ought to see a good Democratic
eye doctor.

Survey says the economy is sliding at a
slower rate. When it stops completely, we're
in trouble.

Ben

FORUM continued from page 2

some definite goals in mind. We want to be sure that they include objectives which will benefit the townspeople, that is, those who do not have a voice through any special interest group. Their concerns may be slightly different in degree or focus.

The communities, too, may differ in their needs or priorities, but all are united in

wanting more consideration given to the comfort and well being of the people of Owens Valley. Below are listed some of the matters which have priority in one or more of the towns. We ask that Inyo County make a serious effort to achieve these benefits.

- (1) No pumping for export in the vicinity of the towns
- (2) Reasonable water rates for domestic use, keeping in mind that this is the source of supply and that the systems in

Owens Valley are in no way a part of the systems in Los Angeles.

(3) A special rate schedule for irrigation of gardens and trees. Any other consideration which would allow affordable water to keep the towns green and attractive.

(4) Provision for watering streetside trees.

(5) Use of ditches to carry unchlorinated water for irrigation.

(6) An Inyo County representative on the Los Angeles Water and Power Commission.

(7) A fair share of taxes on Los Angeles owned land which does not change hands and thus is not subject to the normal increase.

(8) More land available for developing communities or for meeting special community needs. This means acres enough to be meaningful in community planning.

(9) An intelligent water management plan in which Inyo County is considered an equal partner.

(10) A change in attitude to recognize that the people of Owens Valley must not be treated as serfs or second class citizens who should be content with whatever is allowed them by the

Continued on page 21

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before the secretary had come back into the room and that the issue had quickly been dismissed as being "an administrative

matter" not needing formal action. That statement left some wondering what other business gets transacted "coming out of executive session" but never documented.

Ivey continued to hotly deny that it happened that way. "I find that unethical," he said. "I'd have quit the board if we had taken that action. That's not an administrative matter. He (Houghten) doesn't have the right to write off our bills or anyone else's."

Now the matter rests with the D.A., who has so far refused to comment.

PASS THE TYLENOL: PROBLEMS CONTINUE TO ABOUND IN THE INYO AUDITOR'S OFFICE

For most of us, time passes all too quickly. We often wish we could apply the brakes and slow the march of time. But for Inyo County's lame duck auditor, Richard Krejci, the days can't go by quickly enough.

Krejci, of course, was defeated in the June primary in his bid to be elected to the job he held as an appointee. The defeat came on the heels of a grand jury probe into the operations of the auditor's office and their subsequent announcement, three weeks prior to the election, that they had found a number of problems with the county financial record keeping.

Now, Krejci is eager to put it all behind him.

"I just want to dissolve into the wood work," he says candidly. "January can't come soon enough for me."

The auditing department was clearly defensive when the news service recently began looking into the county's current cash flow problems and progress being made on clearing up the audit report "disclaimer." Within minutes of talking to Treasurer John Tracy, one of Krejci's staff members was on the phone to us, demanding to know why we hadn't first talked to the auditing department. Word travels fast on the courthouse grapevine. Either that, or our phones are bugged.

Krejci answered our questions politely but later admitted his stomach did a bit of a flip-flop when we began asking them. "My first thought was, 'Why can't they just leave me alone?' I'm really glad I'm not going to be here. Whoever wins the election

can have this job."

In the meantime, Krejci is trying to get the records computerized and update things enough to get that disclaimer removed. But that, it seems is easier said than done. Krejci told us he felt he could have the records ready in about two weeks time. But a

letter from auditor Wayne Crowder of the accounting firm of Bartig, Bassler and Ray to County Administrator Mike Hanford tells a different story. "Richard indicated it then may take approximately two weeks to complete the year end work. Our estimate would be closer to several months," reads the letter. "Our concern is that the longer it takes, the greater the chance it might not get done before Richard leaves office, and that the new auditor will inherit a deficient accounting system and a work load six months

in arrears, none of which is in the best interest of the County."

And there are more problems with the 1981-82 audit now being worked on. The firm says it has found several "problem areas" including a failure (again) "to properly maintain an outstanding warrants list" and "the deterioration of the accounting systems and procedures." The progress report from BB and R also cites problems with the changover from manual to computerized accounting. Says Crowder: "We found no indication that, under the current system, the monthly work was being balanced and proven for accuracy. As a result the "integrity" of the prior accounting system was destroyed."

No wonder Krejci is glad he isn't going to be here in January.

Sounds like the new auditor should bring a very large bottle of aspirin with him when he reports for work.

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- Vigorously opposed to Peripheral Canal.

- Received a superior rating of 86% (12 out of 14 issues) from Calif. State Chamber of Commerce, based on 1980 state chamber questionnaire results.



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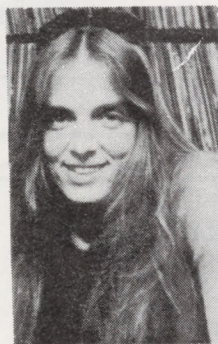


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Hydro: The fight over Oak Creek

Nowhere has the struggle over hydro power been better typified than on tiny Oak Creek north of Independence. Residents of homes along the small but pleasant stream were alarmed to learn from a fine print legal advertisement of plans by the Ft. Independence Indian Tribal Council to develop a small hydro project on the creek.

Unlike many other areas of the Eastern Sierra where big time or quasi-big time developers are setting their sights on the rushing waters of the Sierra, this perceived threat came from neighbors. Or so some of the creek-side residents thought.

But soon opposition was emerging from another, unexpected, quarter. A number of residents of the reservation itself said they were also surprised to hear of the plans and that radio reports from the news service were the first they had heard of it. Long a politically divided group, the Indians against the project accused Tribal Chairman Vernon Miller of secretly working on the hydro plan. Miller called that nonsense and said plans had been in the works for two years and if the other residents had come to monthly meetings they would have been informed.

At a public meeting Miller and consultant Mark Webb listened to complaints from outraged citizens and a well-planned presentation by Tom Van Sant, a creek homeowner and the head of a quickly-formed group called the Oak Creek Association. Van Sant called on experts Dr. Dean Smith, a plant ecologist, and botanist Mary DeDecker to explain what would happen if plans went through to take approximately 70% of the creek water and divert it around the homes and down a pipeline to supply power for the Ft. Independence Campground. The picture they painted was a grim one: They predicted a drastic reduction in vegetation and wildlife. Homeowners were also worried because most get their domestic water supplies from the creek and had no desire to be left dry as the water coursed down a penstock.

So strong was the opposition from both the reservation and non-reservation alike, that the project was temporarily set aside. The Oak Creek Assn. was pleased their action brought some tangible results but wise enough to know the project was not likely to simply disappear.

And sure enough, within a few months word of yet another proposed hydro project on Oak Creek began to circulate. Webb says the tribal council is now studying a different portion of the stream, further up where the penstock would not cross private property. Webb talked with the property owner who would be closest

to the project, Ben Ashworth, a 35-year resident of Oak Creek. Ashworth told him in no uncertain terms what he thought.

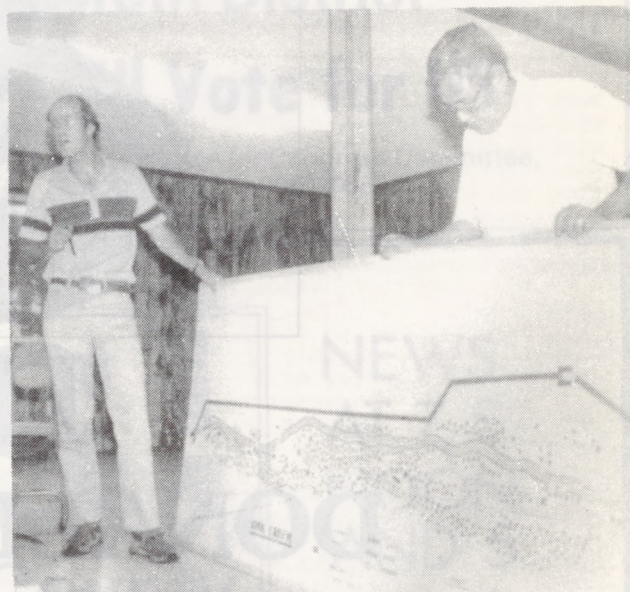
"I'm strongly against it," he says. "Technically, it wouldn't hurt me because the water would be put back (in the streambed) prior to coming through my property. But it's the principle of the thing. I'm not strictly against hydro but I don't think it's a good thing the way it is. Until they can prove to me it's a good thing, I'm against it."

Ashworth says all hydro isn't bad and points to the Bishop Creek development by Edison, which he believes has provided more useable recreation area.

As for Oak Creek, Ashworth has proposed what is perhaps the most straightforward approach yet. "They (the tribal representatives) told me they have \$380,000 from HUD for this project. I asked them why they wanted to do it and they said it was because their electric bills at the campground were running \$400 per month. I told them to put their money in the bank and use the interest to pay the electric bills. That went over like a lead balloon," he chuckles.

And of course HUD won't go for anything that sensible.

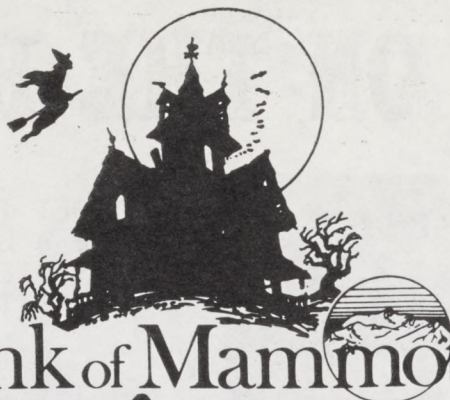
Now Miller and Webb continue to plan. They are awaiting an engineer's report on the



Independence Tribal Chairman Miller and consultant Webb show where they propose to divert water for hydro.

new site since they say it would "minimally impact" the area above Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery. Meanwhile, Webb says he is also looking at an alternative--wind energy--since he thinks it would create as much electricity as hydro for the same amount of money and probably not ruffle as many feathers.

The Oak Creek Association, too, remains active, with Van Sant and others pushing for a postponement on any hydro development until a study is conducted on the cumulative effects of these projects on all the streams of the Eastern Sierra. His group is raising money toward that project and they want to make it clear to the county that such a study is in their minds necessary and push for one before Inyo or anyone else pursues hydro power any further.



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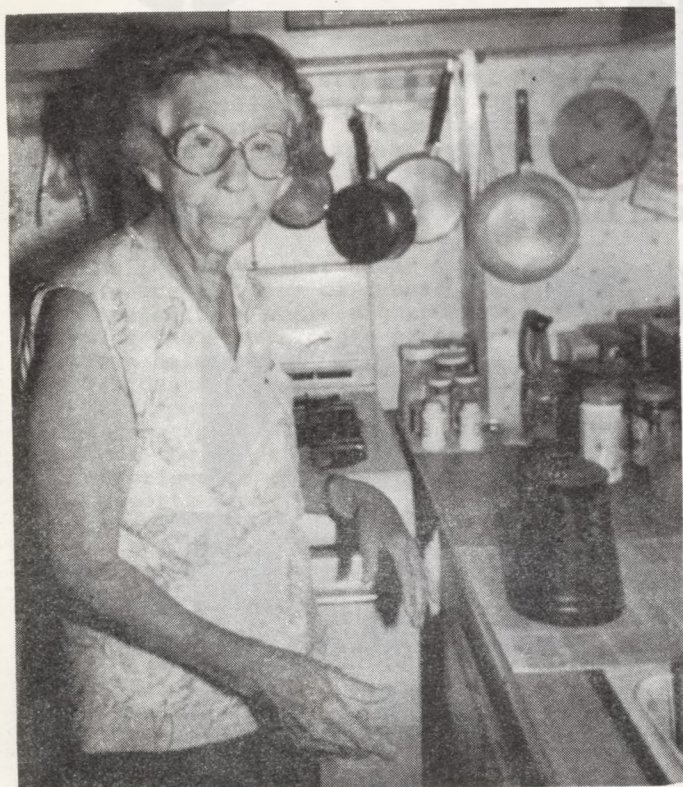
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AT HOME ON THE RANGE



Mary no longer rides the range, but occasionally she gets a hankering for "cowboy coffee" which she prepares in the same pot she used as a buckaroo.

FORGET THE LIBBERS' CRY OF "YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY." 86-YEAR-OLD MARY STEELE WAS LIBERATED LONG BEFORE IT WAS FASHIONABLE...

by Marilyn Fisher

To see her shopping at the market or washing clothes at the laundromat, Mary Steele appears to be a quiet, unassuming woman. No one would guess by looking at the grandmotherly figure that the petite, slightly frail-looking woman once rode the open range as a "buckaroo," roping horses and cattle on ranches all over Nevada and Oregon.

She grew up roping horses, branding cattle and pitching hay. As she accompanied her ranch-hand father on his duties, Mary Steele developed a love for the outdoors and the rambling lifestyle of a cowpuncher...a lifestyle she did not care to leave behind with childhood.

Now 86 (but looking 20 years younger) and a resident of Independence, Mrs. Steele can look back on a colorful and varied past that would make most modern-day "libbers" pale by comparison.

"I grew up on horseback," says the spritely lady. "Yes, it was unusual for a woman to be a cowhand in those days but at first I was with my dad and never thought a thing of it. I did everything the men did. I even shod my own string of nine horses, every spring and every fall."

But Mary kept on riding the range season after season, not caring just yet to abandon the life she loved. Did the men she worked with make life difficult? Occasionally, but even that Mary handled with her typical, straightforward manner.



At left
Shaffer
in 1942
father,
the wil

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Mary on the open range and at the kitchen range. She says she felt more at home at a cattle branding than in a kitchen but would occasionally work as a cook when the money was good.

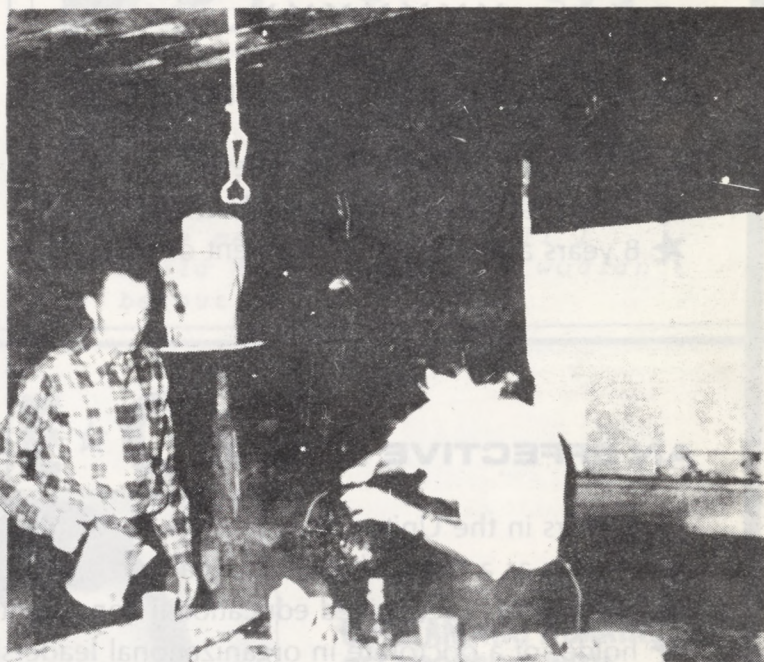
"The men knew dang well I could do the job or I wouldn't be out there. For the most part I was one of the crowd. You'd find a smart alec once in a while but I'd just rope 'em and drag 'em around on their butts behind my horse. After that they were pretty docile." Little wonder.

For all her wild and wooly occupational habits, Mary still found time for a husband and family. Married to cowhand Harry Rose, they raised a son, Harry Eugene. Far from taking time out to raise her son in a more conventional home atmosphere, Harry Eugene simply went along for the ride. "I used to take him with me on my horse and just put him in the saddle in front of me. I'd high-tail it out and go buckarooing with him along." When branding, shoeing or doing her countless other chores, the youngster was placed in an orange crate which served as a make-do play pen. There, he entertained himself playing with grasshoppers and watching mom and dad "buckaroo."

And Mary says her choice of a lifestyle played no havoc with her marriage. "My husband didn't mind at all. We both did the same work. But actually I roped better than he did and I could brand better too." Evidently Harry Rose was possessed of a raised consciousness long before it was fashionable.

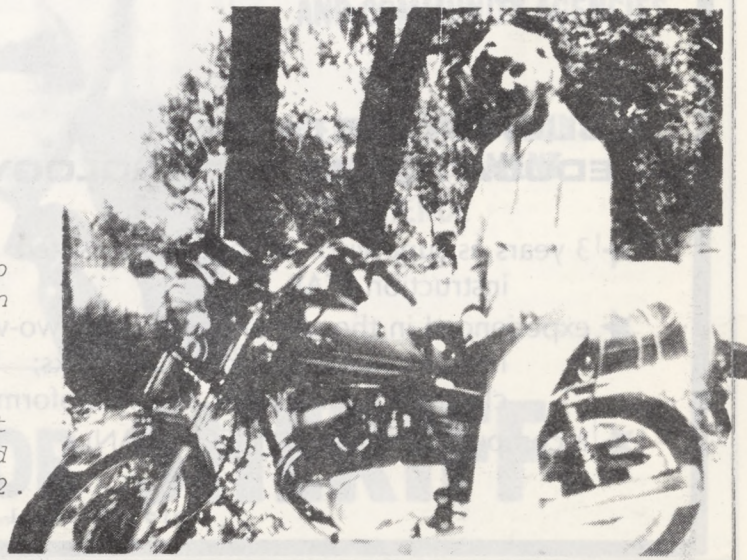
When her son was 13 the two of them built a log cabin from scratch, using only a rope, a chain and a woodworking tool called an adz. "We took up a homestead in Humboldt County, Nevada. We built us a cabin, a barn and a chicken coop all out of logs. It took us all summer to build but it was a good

Continued on page 17



left, Mary posed with fellow cowhand Frank after a deer hunting trip at Badger Camp 1942. After growing up with her ranch formen her, Mary quite naturally took to a life in wild and wide open spaces.

gave up the ranch hand's life at age 56, but evidence in the photo at right, she continued to do things her way...astride a Honda at age 82.



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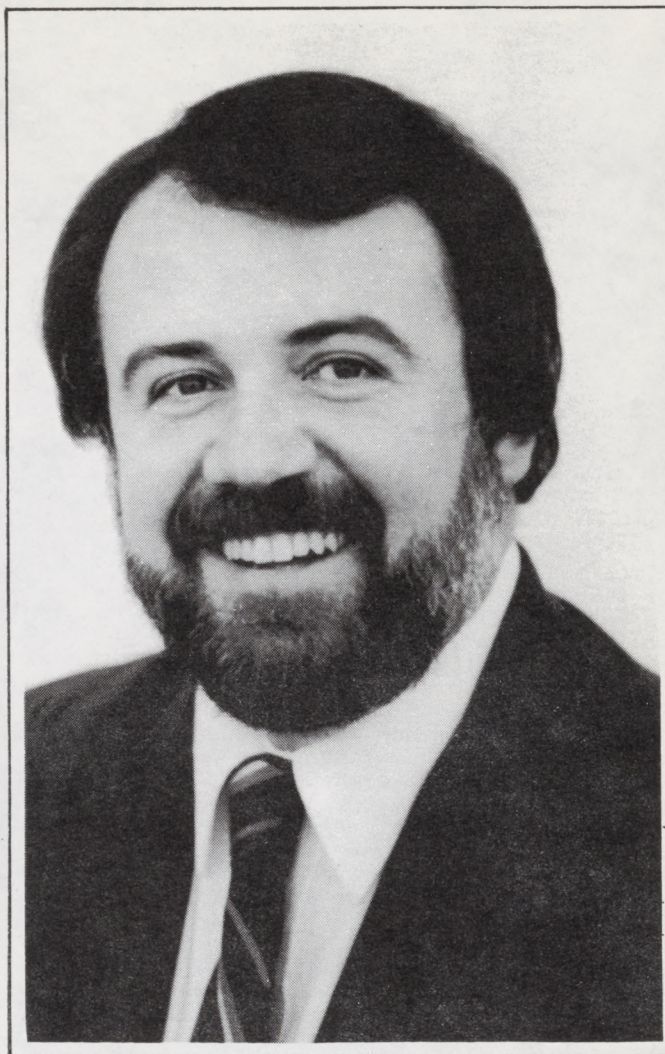
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AT HOME ON THE RANGE continued from page 15

house. We lived in it for three years."

She rode for a living from the time she was eight years old until she was 56. "I was real good with a rope and I must have broke 100 head of horses. We'd catch a bunch of wild mustangs and break them during the winter time. I've hearded sheep and put up hay. I've done everything that was decent and respectable."

Cooking was considered decent and respectable work for a woman and Mary did her share of that, too. But she considered cooking out on the open range much harder work than being a cowhand. "I just didn't like cooking over an open fire," she says. But Mary did spend some time cooking for various outfits when the money was good.

Now with her buckaroo days 30 years behind her, Mary Steele wishes at times she could still ride the range. "I miss that life but I can't get out of the way of a horse anymore, otherwise I'd still be riding out there." Always a blythe spirit, Mary rode a motorcycle at age 82 but now has settled for more conventional transportation in the form of a Volkswagen. She came to the Owens Valley a few years ago to set up housekeeping in a small trailer after traveling much of the country in a motor-home.

She must live frugally now since her only income is from Social Security and a small VA pension. But she gets by.

"I don't mourn for the old days. I just

like to take things as they come," says Mary. "In the process I've learned not to worry. My dad used to say that if you worry it's just like sitting in a rocking chair. All you accomplish is wearing out the carpet."



Mary and a fellow ranch hand
"The men knew dang well I
could do the job or I wouldn't
be out there."

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A GIANT STEP BACK

IN A COMMITTEE MEETING DESIGNED TO FURTHER GOOD COMMUNICATION BETWEEN INYO AND THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, AN L.A. COUNCILMAN DID THE OPPOSITE

by Benett Kessler

One more insult for Inyo County, one giant step backward in the water war.

When Los Angeles City Council members Joan Flores and Marvin Braude decided to hold a meeting of their city council committee in Inyo, a few supervisors and residents saw this gesture as the start of real communication and change in the feudal Inyo-L.A. relationship. And then Inyo and DWP agreed to form committees for regular meetings. A breakthrough? Only if L.A. officials undergo a fundamental change in attitude, and Councilman Braude displayed everything but change when he sat in arrogant pomposity at his committee meeting in Bishop - on Inyo turf.

Members of the Concerned Citizens Committee of the Owens Valley wisely pointed out the basic flaw in the Inyo-L.A. relationship (see FORUM, pg. 2) when they said, "We must realize and make the representatives from Los Angeles realize that they will have to yield more than Inyo if we are to achieve an equal partnership. It will not be easy for them to overcome the attitude that they have the right to dominate in all things." Councilwoman Joan Flores gave Inyo people hope. She at least appeared to be concerned. But in the course of an hour, Marvin Braude managed to obliterate any illusion that Los Angeles had suddenly become the benevolent and sympathetic big sister. Normally Flores' Energy and Natural Resources Committee considers recommending approval of DWP leases for Inyo. Of course, Inyo officials never see what goes on or take part in those meetings. But when Flores and Braude brought their show to Inyo, suddenly Braude had to call Inyo's officialdom on the carpet for interrogation, first on Schober Lane Campground, then business leases. Even DWP's own staff men turned red as Braude proceeded to tell Inyo businessmen that he wants to prohibit their use of off-site billboard advertising and make that a provision of their leases and even of the sale of that land.

Some in the audience at Bishop's City Hall cringed when Braude said, "I can't think of a better legacy to leave the people of Inyo County than a highway free of billboards." Billboards might be an attractive way to obscure the dead brush and trees and desolate, blowing dust. But Braude, totally insensitive to the real pain in Inyo, never even mentioned the water issue.

At least the Flores-Braude visit made one thing clear: Even if Joan Flores is sympathetic to Inyo, there are 14 other Los Angeles City Councilmen who may have the "Braude complex." And perhaps worse than that, most L.A. officials don't even know or care about Inyo. In Los Angeles, water is

still abundantly flowing through the taps, into fountains and swimming pools. In short, L.A. has no incentive to change its human relations with Inyo County. The colonial pat on the head is still getting the water into the aqueduct with relatively little inconvenience. Of course, DWP officials are nervously watching Inyo's groundwater ordinance, hoping to bargain and deal around it.

News-Letter tried over a period of a month to talk with other Los Angeles City Council people. Only one councilman returned our calls - Ernani Bernardi. He said, "I sympathize with you people up there. But we're not really all that bad down here. We ought to be able to work out the problems if we can be reasonable. Both sides are afraid to give a little. All that means is that the lawyers are going to get fat on our intransigence." Bernardi couldn't say specifically what he thinks both sides should give.

Councilman Joel Wachs did not call back, but his aide Greg Nelson did. He obviously knew very little about the details of the Inyo-L.A. fight. Nelson said Wachs thinks Joan Flores' efforts at creating better communication with Inyo are "great." But after all, the L.A. fathers have a lot more to think about that Owens Valley. And Nelson stated a reality that city councilmen come and go with regularity, changing the sentiments of that body on many issues.

But Los Angeles officials may develop a new interest in Owens Valley when they see an ABC Theatre Award presentation called "Ghost Dancing." Phil Penningroth of Tehachapi wrote the play and won the award. He tells us that the production company working on a televised version of his play wants to concentrate on the current Owens Valley-Los Angeles political scene and they are dealing with such stars as Bette Davis, Katherine Hepburn, and Barbara Stanwick to play the lead. In his story, Penningroth has laid bare all of L.A.'s past and present tactics to steal Inyo's water, land and dignity.

In the shadow of a powerful and ruthless city, many Inyo people still want to believe that DWP is a benevolent patron. But a growing number know that Los Angeles will take everything - the water, the environment, and perhaps worst of all - the self-respect and self-determination of the people here. Very few in Inyo want DWP totally out of Inyo-Mono. They're willing to give Los Angeles water for its millions. But in the twentieth century, few want to pay homage to a colonial power and even fewer want to see a Marvin Braude figuratively emasculate Inyo's men in their own territory.

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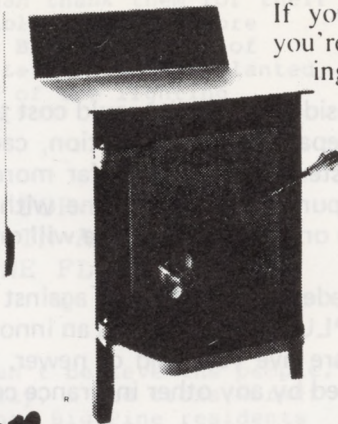
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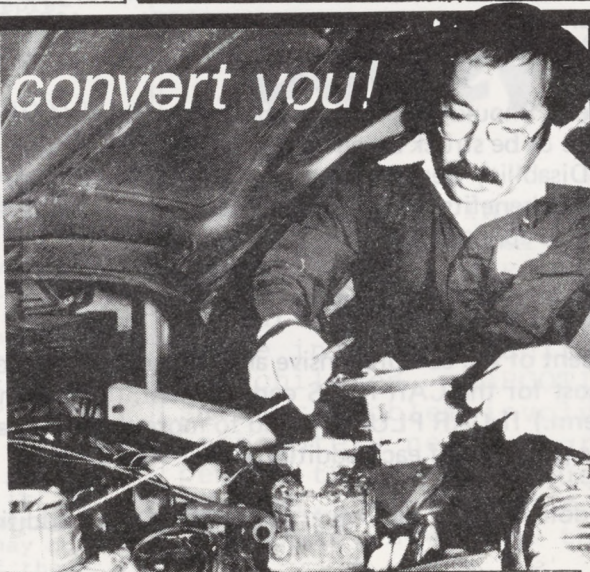


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FORUM continued from page 8

feudal DWP.

It goes without saying, of course, that we must continue the drive for protection of the Owens Valley environment outside the towns.

Since it would not be fair to expect Inyo County to stand the expense of sending people to Los Angeles for more than half the meetings, we trust that alternate meetings will be held in Inyo County.

We consider the Memorandum of Understanding a step in the right direction. We will be very critical, however, if we see it used just to talk or if it becomes an exercise in busy work. This is a time for accomplishment. We have been in this long enough for clear-cut goals. We look on this as an opportunity to insist on a fair deal for the people of Owens Valley, one in which we are accepted as first class citizens with rights dequal to those of Los Angeles residents. The Memorandum does not provide for community representation that we consider essential for achieving the best understanding with the people of Owens Valley. We consider that a weakness which should be corrected. It is no slight to the Inyo Supervisors to say that additional spokesmen are needed to represent the public-at-large. That is common practise, although it is sometimes abused.

If we enter into this with well-balanced, positive attitudes, with clear-cut goals, the result could be a cooperative period of lasting peace. What an achievement that would be for all concerned!

We must realize, however, and make the representatives from Los Angeles realize that they will have to yield more than Inyo if we are to achieve an equal partnership. It will not be easy for them to overcome the attitude that they have the right to dominate in all things. They have had tremendous power, but when power is abused it begins to crumble. The persons we will be dealing with may not be aware of the extent of the abuses, so we cannot hold them entirely to blame. But we must be patiently firm in insisting on fair solutions. Reasonable goals must not be negotiated away.

Clydena Lorenz
Secretary
Concerned Citizens

LIONS LIGHTING LATHER
LOOSES LEMONS, LILACS

Editor:

Lilacs to the Lone Pine
Lions Club, DWP workers and

other community members who supported the club's latest project to light the softball field for local teams. One member, Francis Pedneau, donated his expertise and over 200 hours to make the lights a reality.

Lemons to anyone who would complain about these men rather than thank them for their considerable efforts. More lemons to Benett Kessler of the News-Letter for her slanted reporting of the lighting "incident."

Kay Jacques

PRAISE FOR COMMUNITY SPIRIT IN AFTERMATH OF BIG PINE FLOOD DAMAGE

Editor:

"I can't believe the people," said Beverly, a Red Cross worker who screened Big Pine residents from the flooded reservation to see what help the Red Cross could give them. "They are so hesitant to ask for help that I have to pry the information from them. At other disasters, we found that people almost demand their rights to receive help. Not so here."

In Big Pine, residents prefer to help themselves where

they can. Neighbors help each other to shovel mud and to make repairs left from the flood's aftermath.

An opportunity for us to help has presented itself. Marian, who works at Owens Valley Indian Housing Authority in Big Pine, said, "The flood tore down my fence. I had just stacked a winter's supply of fire wood. The raging waters carried fence and firewood away." Is Marian worried? No. On her low income, Marian supports several children. Being a Christian, she trusts God to meet her needs.

We can be His tools. If each of us gives one small amount of wood, Marian, and others in similar circumstances can face the rigors of winter.

As for incidents where it is impossible for residents to help themselves, Beverly, the Red Cross worker, hopes that they will not feel shame in receiving aid. Instead, they should feel proud that they were able to give an outsider the glow of accomplishment which comes from being able to help a neighbor.

Sometimes by receiving, we give.

Gloria Lewis
Lone Pine

Dorsey for Sheriff

As citizens of INYO COUNTY, we feel that it is our duty to publicly solicit YOUR VOTE for DON DORSEY for SHERIFF.

As parents, we are concerned with the rising crime in our communities involving young adults and children. NARCOTICS are a very real and serious problem involving our young people. We desperately need programs to educate our young people to the consequences of abusing drugs and alcohol. We feel DON DORSEY would be the SHERIFF who would undertake these programs and make them work.

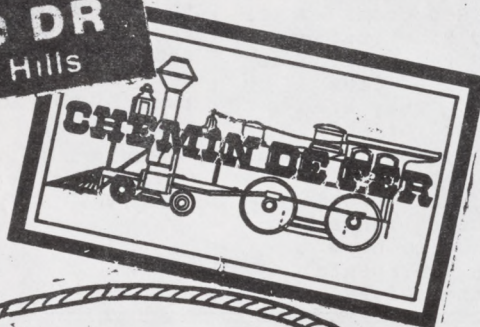
We feel the SHERIFF of INYO COUNTY should not only be required to act as an Administrator in the Sheriff's Department, but also be AVAILABLE to the PUBLIC. DON DORSEY will make himself available for public input. He will come into our communities and assess problem areas. We desperately need a man who will LISTEN!

On November 2nd, VOTE FOR DON DORSEY!

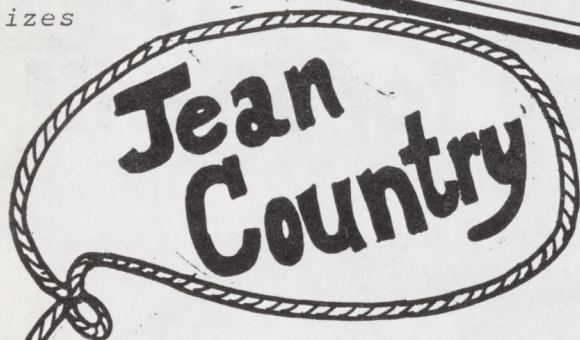
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Books

Spirit Woman, by Bonita Wa Wa Calachaw Nunez
Harper and Row Publishers

by Eva Poole

Here I am, a writer and teacher who supposedly keeps abreast of the publishing world. Yet often I walk into the public library or bookstore knowing exactly what I'm looking for only to find that some orphan-book leaps into my arms. The kid usually has an unusual name, a word or two in bold print which forces my supposedly educated, up-to-date eye to look twice. With the third glance my hands move too. I lift the almost-overlooked child from the shelf.

The kid I most recently "adopted" this way was called *Spirit Woman*. She was published in 1980. Two years ago, I'd never heard of her.

Leafing inward I saw that she was the thirteenth in a series of books of/by Native Americans from Harper and Row. Harper is a fine publisher, I thought to myself: Why is it that the only book I've heard of and read in this series is the first, (*Seven Arrows*)?

I gave up worrying about the reason for that because my following seven days were swallowed up by this particular book. *Spirit Woman* demanded attention like a hungry baby.

The book is a selection of diary excerpts and paintings by Bonita Wa Wa Calachaw Nunez, an American Indian born in 1888 in southern California. The day of her birth was Christmas, but in the mud hut where she was born there was no celebration. Her mother, too poor to care for her, wrapped her in rags and gave her away that very afternoon.

The white woman who adopted her, Mary Duggan, was a wealthy, unmarried woman from New York City. She carried the child back east to raise with the help of her bachelor brother, a doctor. Mary Duggan took a lot of flack from New York socialites for adopting an Indian. It wasn't "the thing to do" then, and it probably wouldn't be today. But before long the Duggans--with some of their more enlightened friends and professional acquaintances--realized that the girl was unusual. Putting aside the unusual circumstances that had brought the foreign-looking, copper-colored child into their midst, they came to see her in her own right, as a unique individual.

For Wa Wa Chaw had an obvious gift for creativity. At a very young age she began to use this gift in helping her adoptive father. He was a physician particularly interested in finding a cure for cancer. He would bring home specimens from the hospital: a portion of a cancerous tissue or a diseased organ or laboratory animal. His daughter would sketch these. More correctly, she would draw them very, very carefully. The doctor discovered that Wa Wa Chaw saw these specimens so thoroughly, with such depth, that her renderings often disclosed information NOT visible to the trained eye even under a microscope! He

showed her drawings to other doctors, and they agreed that she had a special vision. Dr. Duggan used the drawings in diagnoses, treatment and follow-up with seriously ill patients. On occasion they were the impetus to remission and cure.

Much later, after Wa Wa Chaw had grown up



An example of the work of Native American painter and author Bonita Wa Wa Calachaw Nunez.

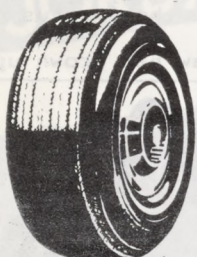
up and been through an unsuccessful marriage, she diversified her drawings; in fact, she painted original oils and sold them on the streets of New York City. One day in the 1920's she was showing her work in Washington Square. Two little girls came along with their mother. The children were intrigued with her paintings and wanted to stop. But their mother pulled them away, saying, "Why look at rubbish? She's a wild Indian. Come on and look at real painting." However, Wa Wa Chaw tells that "One of the little girls did not quite believe her Mother. She was looking at another group of paintings.

Continued on page 25

NEW LOCATION...

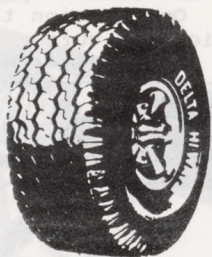
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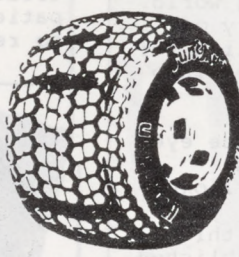
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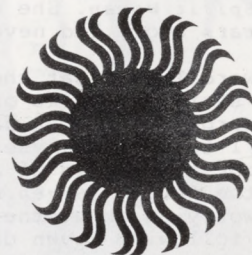
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LOCAL NEWS

with
BENETT KESSLER
& Marilyn Fisher

AT 7,9
NOON
AND 6



BOOKS continued from page 23

When I looked up the girl threw Me a kiss with her little hand." (At that time there were very few "city Indians," but I guess that didn't make them more popular.)

Wa Wa Chaw could not only draw and paint; she also had an original way of expressing herself verbally and in writing. When she died in 1972 at the age of 84, she left behind 38 notebook-diaries, and it was these that Stan Steiner edited into *Spirit Woman*. Wa Wa Chaw never had a formal, school education. This may partially explain why she, all her life, retained not only a highly distinctive manner of spelling and capitalization, but also a truly parable-like way of expression. She bent syntax--the order of parts of speech in sentences--so that inner meaning was clear. The way she spelled and put words in line stressed the particular meaning of each word she had chosen and demonstrated the essence of her viewpoint. Note, for instance, these four memorable and epigrammatic nuggets:

Tolerance: I found if I listen to the others first and hear what they had for an Opinion I would receive the evidence to help Me carry on with the help of Courage to overlook the ignorance they express. With this in Mind I have overcome many pitfalls in Human relationship. (page 20)

I Knew that Mother was always interested in any institution where higher learning was acquired. Mother told Me that intolerance was a form of Mental Poverty. (page 33)

Dr. Duggan said, "Wa Wa you can draw up the plan. I know you can." His words sank into My Mind like a needle penetration of the flesh. I called on the Doctor's carpenter. And explained what I wanted done for the table. And in My surprise I was to learn something new about timber, and how to assemble pieces of timber, I listened for about two hours and on leaving I thanked the carpenter. He told Me it would take two weeks or more before he could bring the parts to the apartment. However it was a most interesting visit. I realized one never need be lonesome. There are always subjects of interest in the World. Every moment of our Lives can be spent seeking and learning. Just think of it: The carpenter told Me that the study of trees, just trees, can occupy Man's entire life. (page 89)

Oh dear, when I think it is not only the Indians and many others of this wonderful earth that suffer, but those that wish to help to eliminate these sad conditions, they are denounced. (page 90)

Fascinating ideas and events do abound in *Spirit Woman*. A simple example which I cannot forget is the following. One day Wa Wa Chaw called Stan Steiner, her longtime friend, and told him that she was going to die soon. Two weeks later she went to check into a hospital. They asked her what the complaint was. She

told them she had come there to die. They ran tests but found no signs of illness. Thinking she was a crank, a hospital social worker called a friend to come get her.

However, by the end of that day she was dead.

After Wa Wa Chaw's death, Stan Steiner went to her apartment to find the diaries she'd wanted him to have. He was let in by a neighbor from across the hall. This woman also allowed in many of the neighborhood children. They helped themselves to the canvases stacked against the walls. Stan Steiner protested, but the neighbor replied that the children were Wa Wa Chaw's art students and that she had often given them her original works. Stan decided that the neighbor knew best, that it was as Wa Wa Chaw would have wanted it.

So, many of Wa Wa Chaw's paintings--perhaps some of her best--are now hanging on tenement walls in New York City, for she lived in Harlem at the time of her death.

Spirit Woman is a book you'll not want to put down. It is a book full of astounding insights--educational, historical, cultural, spiritual and political. I wish not only that thousands of men and women would read *Spirit Woman* for the terrific human document of a life that it is; I also wish these readers would be prompted to write to Mr. Steiner as I have, encouraging him to gather a sizable portion of Wa Wa Chaw's visual art so this genius's paintings could be as readily available to the American public as are her writings. We might even suggest a traveling exhibit of her works to California.

Spirit Woman is available through Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 10 East 53rd Street, New York, New York 10022 (\$12.95).



The NEWS-LETTER

Inyo and Mono

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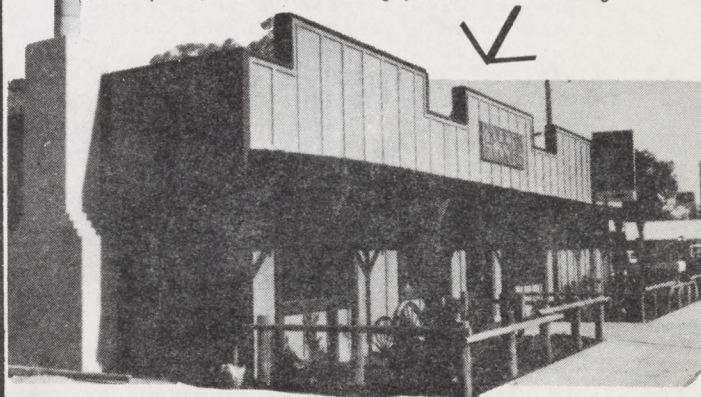
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Notes from B.K.



ON KNOWING THE PRICE OF EVERYTHING AND THE
VALUE OF NOTHING / HOLD THE BRISTLECONES
HOSTAGE? THAT'S ONE WAY TO GET A LAND TRADE

IT'S AN OBSESSION WITH SOME PEOPLE - knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing. With the exception of two or three supervisors, the human and ethical values find only a slim platform in the Inyo courthouse boardroom.

Granted, the county budget has real and pressing problems. The supervisors must keep the dollar in mind and save it wherever possible. But the "penny wise and pound foolish" approach does not a bank account make fat.

A monomaniacal view of the dollar - "how much does it cost" - is not the answer. Nit-picking on the cost (and it is a high one) of the Water Department, the DWP lawsuits, is self-defeating and will only create a total loss of all that the county has invested in the fight. To delay and inhibit in any way this and other major issues now will end in a much higher cost in the long run.

At least one supervisor - P.D. Cook - has only one question for any proposal: "How much does it cost?" It's a good and pertinent question. But that querie should never be the ONLY evaluation.

Until DWP is brought to heel, Inyo County will NEVER see a day in which it is not short of money. Because of DWP, and some of the federal bureaucracies, we will not have a tax base or the necessary but limited growth we need for a strong economy. History shows that is true in the case of every colonial situation. And let's face it. There are few people, especially in America, who prefer colonial life.

AND WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT OF BUREAUCRATS - Some Forest Service officials make much over how they want to manage public lands for the good of the American people. Inyo and Mono Countians live with millions of federal acres around them - federal acres that provide no property taxes for local government. There is one small thing the Forest Service could do for Inyo County: For a long time, Inyo officials have tried to trade the county-owned Bristlecone Forest lands to the Forest Service in exchange for something valuable and helpful to the county. For instance, if the Forest Service would trade acres at Haiwee Reservoir to Inyo for the Bristlecone, Inyo County government would gain a very important bargaining tool to use in negotiations with the City of Los Angeles. DWP wants the Haiwee acres for possible rebuilding of the Haiwee Dam.

One courthouse official, one with a great wit but too modest to go public with it, slyly joked that Inyo County could deliver one

sawed-off Bristlecone pine tree to the Forest Service every day, with the message that the saw will keep right on buzzing until the Forest Service gives in on a good land trade.

IN MAMMOTH SOME PEOPLE LOST THEIR TEM-PERS when the air pollution control director, Chuck Fryxell, said that wood burning stoves and fireplaces are polluting the alpine air of Mammoth Village. That's what his monitoring equipment discovered. At least Mammothites can be glad they're not operating under an old English rule. When his subjects burned coal, polluting the air with a fine, black dust, one of the medieval kings of England, we are told, simply lopped off their heads. Fryxell hasn't exactly said what he will do.

A BRIGHT AND TALENTED YOUNG MAN who grew up in Independence has made quite a mark for himself. Doug Mull decided one day that he wanted to be a chef. Well, he started out cooking in Inyo. Doug delighted the tastes of diners at Knight Manor. Now he has sauteed and fricasseed his way into the home of an Oklahoma City millionaire. Mull, who just came from a cooking job at an Alaskan lodge, says his millionaire employer wants him to serve as private chef for his family as they fly from Oklahoma to homes in New York, Palm Springs and Aspen.

You've come a long way, baby.

AND SPEAKING OF DINING - Tillie's Terrace in Mammoth is delightful...an imaginative menu and attractive surroundings. Love the eggs florentine. We hear that developer Roger Affa, who built Tillie's, has big plans for a Mexican restaurant in Mammoth Sierra Centre too.

While that Affa project seems to be running smoothly, the controversial developer may lock horns with the courts over his Aspen Creek development. Judge Harry Roberts ruled that the Mono Supervisors and Planning Commissioners failed to follow the rules on the Aspen Creek planning process. Rumor has it that some other, envious Mammoth developers are kind of hoping Affa will not flood the market with more building at Aspen Creek.

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